



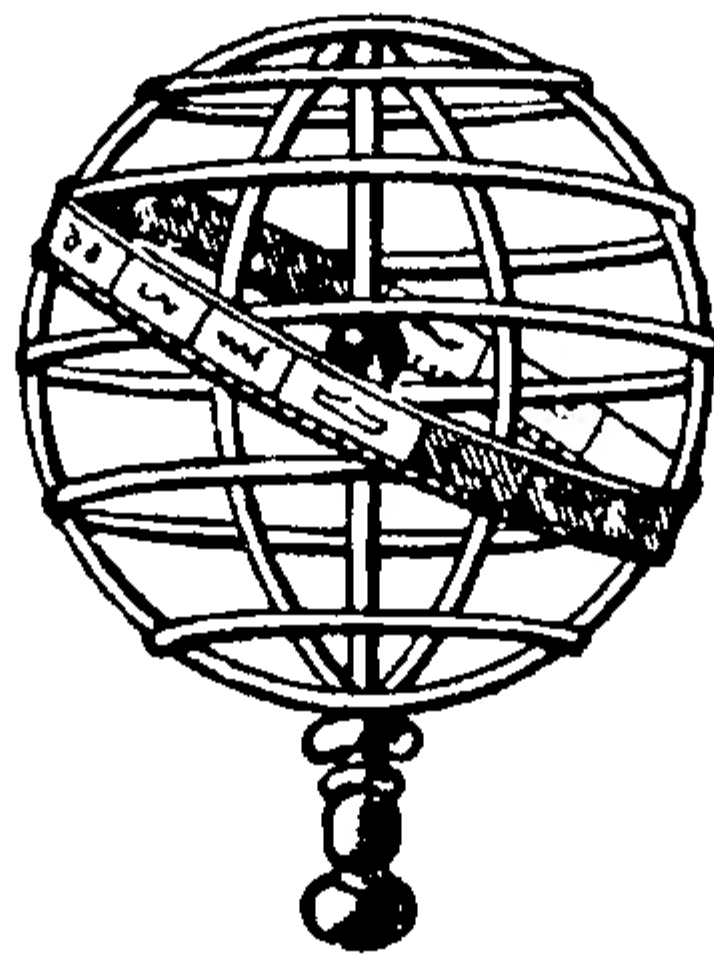
THE NEGRO RACE,
THE PIONEER
IN CIVILIZATION,
AS PROVEN FROM
Monumental Evidence,
AND THE
UNBIASED TESTIMONY
OF
EMINENT WITNESSES,
BY
D. B. WILLIAMS.

RICHMOND, VA.
1883.



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PREFACE.

After an extended reading and investigation in the beauteous fields of historic research, indulged sometimes miscellaneously, at others systematically, we were much surprised at the agreeable discovery of much overlooked truth. The superabundant evidence and unquestioned testimony of histories and historians have strongly convinced us that the Negro race was the great and illustrious pioneer race in the multiplex art learning and civilization of the brilliant nineteenth century. We were seized with an insatiable longing to present a fact so pregnant with honor and glory to the Negro nationality to the honorable representatives of that race.

A presentation of such a truth could not fail to elicit the highest commendation of all. It must from necessity inspire the bosom with grander and higher conceptions of the inherent nobility and excellency of their forefathers. They would most assuredly feel themselves far above the plane of inferiority and littleness so boldly and defiantly hurled at them by the vast majority of the Caucasian (white) race. This thought and fact, clearly and concisely related to the plastic mind of the young child, would tend to the rich development of that superb manhood and womanhood which constitute the glory of a people.

Geo. R. Morrisette
April 25th — 87

THE NEGRO RACE

THE PIONEERS IN CIVILIZATION.



The land of Egypt has been frequently denominated "The Cradle of Civilization." The unswerving advocates of this belief are ready, in the admission of the fact that, in the rich historic valley of Mesopotamia, the beginning of the arts, science and learning of the world was among the descendants of Noah. They mean to be understood as affirming that, after the separation of Ham, Shem and Japheth, the earliest form of civilization worthy of admiration was born and nurtured in Egypt.

Some of the most learned and distinguished historians of the various races, after a very thorough and laborious research, have time and again embodied this in their works.

In the accurate and compendious history of the world by the scholarly Swinton the most antique civilization (arts, science, sculpture, monumental skill and the renown and pomp of cities) are attributed to this land.

Rollins and Rawlinson, in works known to the world by their great popularity, wreath around the immortal brow of Egypt the chaplet of antiquity. Prof. G. Rawlinson, of the University of Oxford, in a

most popular production entitled "The Origin of Nations," most ably discusses the various civilizations of antiquity, and proclaims Egypt the most ancient.

Nor has the transcendent palm and surpassing glory, "Cradle of Civilization," been awarded to the memorable land of the proud Pharoahs without cause.

The language and literature of the old Egyptians are the most antique of any which has been transmitted through the ages. Her stately monuments, huge pyramids, wondrous obelisks and gigantic temples are filled with the history of the achievements of the nation.

Owing to this indisputable fact, the most learned Egyptologists have boldly claimed for Egypt a great age.

The able Lenormant and Mariette place the commencement of civilization in Egypt at 5004 B. C. Dr. Brugsch, director of the Museum of Antiquities at Berlin, dates the accession of Menes, or the beginning of civilization, at 4004 B. C. Dr. Lepsius gives the date as 3892, while the well-known Baron Bunsen claims 3059.

The great reason for such conflicting statements is that the Egyptians were devoid of a chronological system.

It was not their custom to enter into a computation of time. Sometimes they willingly computed the number of years during which a certain god occupied the Egyptian throne.

“Chronology,” says Baron Bunsen, “cannot be elicited from them.” M. Mariette bears this testimony, that the Egyptians never had any chronology at all. All attempts to establish a chronological scheme for Egypt would have proved utterly futile if Manetho, a priest under the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (280-250 B. C.), had not written a very learned work on Egyptian history.

This very interesting and useful work has been lost, but certain abstracts have reached us in the learned writings of Eusebius and Syncellus, and a few quotations in Josephus.

We repeat, that the great cause of denominating Egypt the cradle of civilization is couched in the fact of a literature, embodied in monuments and extracts of Eusebius and Syncellus, the most ancient yet discovered by antiquarians.

We are compelled, from the indubitable evidence of history, to designate Egypt the cradle of civilization in the sense that Phœnicia, Greece and Rome obtained their rudiments of learning and the beginnings of their civilization from Egypt. In the same sense Phœnicia can be considered the cradle of civilization to Greece and Carthage; for Phœnicia, lying north of Egypt on the eastern border of the Mediterranean sea, imparted her alphabet, culture and general civilization to them. Phœnicia for 1550 years traded with the innumerable isles of the sea and sailed her trafficking ships to renowned Spain. In the identical sense, Greece may be well

termed the cradle of civilization of Rome. Imperial Rome received the inspirations to civilization from the philosophy, rhetoric, sculpture, painting, and government of æsthetic Greece.

When the proud city of the Caesars (Rome) surrendered her pompous sway, in 476 A. D., she had abundantly diffused her liberal arts—painting, sculpture, architecture, philosophy, learning and political wisdom—into the ten countries into which Europe suffered a division.

The glorious city which the noble Augustus found composed of brick, but left constructed of marble, deserves the recognition, cradle of the civilization of Europe.

The pious-hearted Pilgrim Fathers, fired with the longings for religious freedom, braved the dangers of the mad seas, and brought the civilization of Europe to Massachusetts. The early discoverers of our beloved continent—Columbus, the Cabot brothers, La-Salle, Balboa and others—had been diligently schooled in Europe. Europe, then, may be denominated the cradle of civilization of America.

The true and indisputable cradle of civilization must be sought for in the Garden of Eden. After the sweeping deluge (2948 B. C.), the true and only cradle of civilization must be found among Noah, his wife, his sons, and his sons' wives.

In claiming for the Negro, or Ethiopian race, the dignity of "Pioneer in Civilization," we desire to be

understood as affirming and maintaining that the most influential civilization, after the separation of the sons of Ham, Shem and Japheth, belonged to the Negro, or black race.

In the gathering of suitable and trustworthy evidence that advanced agriculture and the arts, humanizing and civilizing commerce, high learning, monuments, temples, grand and flourishing cities were first developed with and maintained by the honorable Negro race, we shall rely upon two sources: monumental evidence and the unprejudiced testimony of learned and competent authorities.

A very distinguished writer affirms that the race of Ham was found on the plains of Shinar early after the deluge, a "highly civilized and advanced one."

The tenth chapter of Genesis may be adduced as conclusive proof that eastern and southern Asia, as well as northern Africa, were peopled by the children of Ham.

But late investigations on the subject of different races have developed peculiar traces of the Negro race through all the countries of southern Asia and eastern Africa.

A large number of oriental temples and the various images worshipped therein most clearly show to what distinct race the original builders and worshippers of those temples belonged.

Buddha and Amada are the chief deities among the inhabitants of Siam. They are made with the closest

resemblance to the Negro race. Buddha is the supreme and all directing god, or idol, to the perhaps more than 300,000,000 of inhabitants of southern Asia. This much adored and senseless, motionless idol is represented with Negro features and hair.

In the very celebrated caves of Elephanta, near Bombay, India, travellers have frequently witnessed idols and statues with pure and simple Negro features. Many travellers and antiquarians, going to various portions of India, have made mention of the city of Nag-poor as adorned with statues and idols of a woolly-haired race.

We cannot demand stronger evidence than this that the people who originally made and adored such images were Negroes. A race fairer in complexion would never have adopted as divinities the forms and features of a race differing from themselves. These black-featured and woolly-haired images, idols and statues were the workmanship of the old Cushites, who early settled India and the regions roundabout.

Antiquarians who have made the most minute investigations in India, Egypt, Nubia and Abyssinia affirm that there is a most striking resemblance between the temples of worship and style of architecture. On good and satisfactory authority, there is a peculiar identity in respect to architecture and worship between the temples of Nubia and similar edifices in the neighborhood of Bombay.

The old temples of Hindostan differ widely from those of modern date. The children of Shem have supplanted the children of Ham. It is to these old temples that reference is made in treating of the remarkable oneness existing between the temples of Africa and India.

What mean the Negro features of the chief idol of southern Asia? What mean the black faces, black hands and wooly hair of Buddha and Amada among the Siamese?

How is it that there is such a close resemblance between temples and other structures in countries so remote as Nubia or Ethiopia and Hindostan? Can any mind possibly believe that any other than the Negro race were the workmen of them?

The mind must inevitably be brought to the conclusion that the civilizers of the world were the "black-faced and the wooly-haired." The first development in the arts and sciences, in general knowledge and human advancement doubtless commenced on the plains of Shinar, among the children of Ham. One stream flowed toward the east into India, Persia and China, and, by climatic influence, assumed a black complexion. Another poured toward the west into Ethiopia and Nubia.

Aside from such convincing evidence as the foregoing, we are glad to be able to marshal the learned testimony of distinguished gentlemen.

The writers of whom we make honorable mention have given the most faithful study to the subject of races and civilization. They are members not of the race which has suffered such degradation for nearly three thousand years, but of the highly cultured, wealthy and influential one—the Caucasian.

It would not be expected that such witnesses would be ready to award such an unfading lustre to a race other than their own, and especially to one for years considered the cursed of the cursed.

Pritchard, Hamilton Smith, Morton and other ethnological writers have given abundant evidence that “there was a time when the black race of men were pioneers, or at least the equals of any other race in all the arts and acquirements of man’s primitive civilization.” Pritchard, Hamilton Smith, Morton, Ritter, Trail, T. B. Hamilton and Sir Wm. Jones, writers of great learning and research, hesitate not to assert that the aborigines of Hindostan were a race of Negroes—at least had both the features and hair of Negroes.

Perhaps that illustrious scholar in oriental lore, Sir Wm. Jones, has presented the most comprehensive testimony on our subject. He says: “The pyramids of Egypt, the colossal statues described by Pausanias and others, the Sphirides and the Hermis Canis, which last bears a strong resemblance to the Varaha Aratar (a Hindoo god), indicates the style of the same indefatigable workmen who formed the vast excavations

of Canaia, in West Indies, the various temples and images of Buddha, and the idols which are constantly dug up at Guya or in its vicinity. These and other indisputable facts may induce no ill-grounded opinion that Ethiopia and Hindostan were peopled or colonized by the same extraordinary race." He concludes in these memorable words: "We would therefore seem to hazard nothing in the conclusion that commerce and arts, sciences and learning, civilization and human improvement in general were first identified with and developed through a race that has now for long ages been associated only with degradation and barbarous ignorance. And we are equally justified in the conclusion which an intelligent writer has drawn, that the degradation of this race of men must be regarded as the result of external causes, and not of natural inherent and original incapacity."

We shall now produce the testimony of an individual from whose lips, owing to the circumstances which surrounded him, we should never have expected such a confession.

Rev. Thomas Smith, D. D., of Charleston, in a valuable work entitled the "Unity of the Human Races," 1856, says: "We may therefore, as philosophic inquirers seeking after truth, admit the full force of any facts which may encourage the belief that there was a time when the black race of men were the pioneers, or at least the equals of any other races in all the arts and acquirements of man's civilization." He

advances a step further when he states, "There was a time when learning, commerce, arts and manufactures were all associated with a form and character of the human race now regarded as the evidence only of degradation and barbarous ignorance."

We cannot but admit the great truth that the Negro race were the original civilizers after the migrations from the plains of Shinar. They developed the highest and noblest form of civilization. The descendants of Shem and Japheth also developed a certain kind of civilization, but it was far from rivaling that of the descendants of Ham. The beginnings of civilizing agriculture and commerce and manufactures were originally enlarged in that race.

The cultivation of letters, the triumphs of science and learning, the glories of architectural splendors and religious worship, in the early ages, obtained a broader and higher development among them than among the other existing nations of their day.

The Rev. Hollis Read expended years of diligent research in the history of the various races. As a historic scholar, few can boast of equaling him. He has written several of the most profound works known to the English tongue. His "God in History," "Footprints of the Devil," "India and her People," "The Negro Problem Solved," show most minutely his intimate acquaintance with the world's achievements. After a profound and scholarly reasoning on the antiquity of the Negro, he adds: "We would, therefore,

seem to hazard nothing in the conclusion that commerce and the arts, science and learning, civilization and human improvement in general were first identified with and developed through a race that has now for long ages been associated only with degradation and barbarous ignorance."

Such are the testimonials concerning the Negroes as the first civilizers of the world after the flood. They are most profoundly qualified for imparting a judgment on this important subject. They are witnesses who seem to answer to the exacting demands of Greenleaf, Blackstone and others. They cannot be suspected of anything but truth; for, being allied to the Caucasian (white) race, it is natural to suppose they would gladly award such honor to their own family of men.

Time will not permit me to mention the odium and reproach which befell them, because of imparting a conviction so much at variance with the majority sentiment of the world.

We are constrained to the conviction, from the monumental and testimonial evidence which we have accumulated, that the most important civilization after the flood was developed among the black race of men. We believe that the foregoing evidence is sufficient to convince an unbiased historic student that the first and most significant civilization appeared among the black races.

From the earliest times we have heard mention of a black, or sun-burnt, race in eastern Africa. Moses, in the tenth chapter of Genesis, sixth verse, says: "And the sons of Ham, Cush and Mizraim, and Phut and Canaan." The eminent and able Rawlinson, in a late treatise on the subject of ethnology, says: "The word Cush is for the most part in the authorized version translated Ethiopia."

These identical Ethiopians were the first and most eminent civilizers in Africa after the flood.

The Egyptians obtained their glories in civilization from the Negroes, as is evidenced from the fact that the Negro race boasted of the earliest and best civilization.

But it is clear that the Egyptians obtained their civilization from the Ethiopian Negroes. It was much more easy and natural to obtain it from them. Ethiopia was directly south of Egypt, but India far to the eastward. From Ethiopia to Egypt there is an extended line of cities, strongly resembling each other in monumental structure, showing how a stream of colonization spread from Ethiopia to Egypt. An examination of the civilization of that once famous land will be most interesting and instructive.

The historic Nile rises in the southern portion of Africa, and pours a vast volume of water through Ethiopia into the Mediterranean. This well-known stream overflows its banks for almost six months in the year, and deposits on the soil a very rich, dark

loam. The whole valley of the Nile is rendered capable of producing a large class of productions. Ponce, a Jesuit missionary who labored zealously in Abyssinia, gives us an insight into the fertility of Africa. "There is," says he, "scarcely a country on the globe so thickly peopled, or the soil so rich and productive, as the territory of Ethiopia. All the valley and sides of the mountains are, for the most part, subdued and moulded by the hand of cultivation, and the plains are mantled by aromatic plants which shed around them delightful fragrance."

The very fact that a stream so large overflowing the country, united with a very warm climate, proves beyond contradiction that the people were agriculturists.

When they entered the regions of Ethiopia they bore with them the rudiments of civilization.

To what extent they labored in the fields cannot be ascertained. Beyond doubt, we may safely affirm that they raised wheat, corn, pomegranites, olives, dates, and other productions found in the country at later times.

Agriculture is an inspiration to the intellect. The mind must be employed in the various operations of husbandry. It prepares the soil, places in the bosom of the earth the seed, tends the crops, harvests, and turns to use. The reasoning powers are employed in the various means used, and the memory is strained to hold the same.

It is not known what inventions they made to facilitate the labor of the farm. Great remains of dykes, canals and large artificial works of different character may even now be found.

The commerce of this people was not of such small insignificance. The skill, enterprise and general intelligence essential to successful commerce evince that they were far removed from a barbarous or savage condition.

Means and agencies, such as ships, boats, transfers, were employed to extend the boundaries of Queen Commerce.

Meroe, the proud city of Nubia, was the great emporium of traffic between Egypt, Abyssinia, Ethiopia and the contiguous regions. Myrrh, frankincense, gold and various dyes were imported by way of the Indian Ocean into the illustrious Meroe. Ships and boats floated on the broad bosom of the Nile, bearing the multiplex articles of trade from Meroe into historic Egypt. Vast numbers of camels, laden with the richest and most desirable products of the mineral and vegetable world, might have been witnessed going to and from proud Ethiopia.

That the commerce, or exchange of commodities of various kinds, was very extensive, especially in her palmy days, cannot be reasonably doubted. In the flourishing days of Solomon, king of Israel, Ethiopia carried on a most lucrative trade with Israel. The in-

ference is just that she enjoyed no small commercial relationship with other countries.

It is difficult to learn the exact manufactures of that interesting people. It is known, however, that fabrics were woven quite extensively. The garments worn by the people were for the most part the result of their own skill and industry.

It is believed by those who have laboriously investigated the splendors of this ancient people that the manufacture of metals was as great in Ethiopia as in Egypt. From the advanced culture which existed among them, we cannot but believe that household improvements, instruments and tools for facilitating agriculture, commerce and manufactures, and articles adapted to comfort and pleasure, were formed by them.

How far these people were advanced in the bright domain of science it is impossible to tell. That the fields of science were not unexplored by them is manifest from the wondrous exhibitions of art which remain, despite vandalism and ignorance, until this day. The whole valley of the Nile is covered with vast skillfully constructed pyramids, huge remains of temples, obelisks, sphynxes, and mammothean piles of stones and pillars. In this region, so memorable by virtue of these monuments of by gone glories, these workmanships of past generations impart some glimpse of the height to which that people attained. Pyramids extending two and three hundred feet in the air, com-

posed of solid masonry, greet the eye of the traveller. Think for a moment of a large number of such monster heaps of stone, and you will obtain but a faint conception of the wonderful mechanical genius and engineering ability of that people.

The far-famed pyramids of Egypt can boast of a superiority in size only, but not in beauty of build and art of construction. Says the illustrious Wm. Wells Brown, the Negro historian : "The pyramids of Ethiopia, though inferior in size to those in Egypt, are said to surpass them in architectural beauty."

The edifices and sepulchres of sun-parched Ethiopia evince a taste and cultivation of science which can boast an equality with those of Egypt.

The emotional language of Denon, of the scientific corps under Bonaparte, expressed on witnessing the magnificent temple of Dendera, in Egypt, may well illustrate the feelings and thoughts of one who contemplates on the architectural grandeur of the temples, pyramids and obelisks of Ethiopia. "I felt that I was in the sanctuary of the arts and sciences. This monument seemed to me to have the primitive character of a temple in its highest perfection. How many periods presented themselves to my imagination at the sight of such an edifice.

"How many ages of creative ingenuity were requisite to bring a nation to such a degree of perfection and sublimity in the arts! And how many more of oblivion to cause these mighty productions to be for-

gotten, and to bring back the human race to the state of nature, in which I found them on this very spot. Never was there a place which concentrated in a narrower compass the well-marked memorial of the progressive lapse of ages. What unceasing power, what riches, what abundance, what superfluity of means must a government possess which could erect such an edifice and find within itself citizens capable of conceiving and executing the design of decorating and enriching it with everything that speaks to the eye and the understanding!

“Never did the labor of man show me the human race in so splendid a view. In the ruins of Dendera the Egyptians appear to me giants.”

As to the educational system which existed in Ethiopia, we have been enabled to glean but few facts. In an educational work entitled “A History and Progress of Education,” written by Philobiblius, the author treats the educational system of Egypt and Abyssinia as identical. From his method of discussing the educational custom of the Egyptians, we may safely infer that in his mind there was no essential difference between the education of both people.

Among the Egyptians the priests, warriors and professional men, including judges, architects, writers and doctors, constituted the privileged classes. They only were deemed the proper subjects of a high culture. They were taught the common mode of writing, the science of geometry and mensuration of land, arith-

metic, astronomy, chemistry. Architecture, sculpture, painting, music and the science of medicine were also learned by the aforementioned classes.

Artificers, agriculturists and herdsmen, except the swine-herds, were allowed but little education, which was usually communicated by their parents or near relatives.

From the general civilization and advancement of the proud Ethiopians, we do not hesitate to claim that arithmetic, geometry, mensuration, architecture, sculpture and medicine were taught and learned among them. The extended commerce enjoyed by them also furnished a strong incentive to the glories of education by imparting to them new ideas of the educational systems among other people.

In the art of war they were equal to any nation of antiquity. They expended much care and effort in the making and preserving the agencies of battle. The war chariots served as cavalry. They were made low, with open back, which easily admitted the warrior from behind.

Particular and careful attention were paid to the breeding of horses. Affixed to the side of each chariot was a highly decorated quiver and bow case. The bow was the national weapon. The warriors were carefully and studiously educated in its effective use from earliest childhood. The spear, dagger, shield, helmet, the pole-axe and the battle-axe were conspicuous among their arms. Swords, maces and clubs

were also employed on the field by the light-armed troops.

Herodotus, the father of history, in his third book, has given a picture of the warlike character of this people. Cambyses, the Persian monarch, having subdued Egypt, is seized with an inordinate desire to overpower Ethiopia. He sends to their country ambassadors burdened with presents under the guise of friends. The king, a large, well-constructed man, perceives their shallow hypocrisy, and presents to them a bow of such enormous size that none of the secretive messengers could bend it. He handed it to one, saying: "Give your king this bow, and in my name speak to him thus: 'The king of Ethiopia sends this counsel to the king of Persia: When his subjects shall be able to bend this bow with the same ease that I do, then let him venture to attack the long-lived Ethiopians. Meanwhile, let him be thankful to the gods that the Ethiopians have not been inspired with the same love of conquest as himself.'"

In their conquests they overran Egypt, southern Europe, northern Africa and southwestern Asia. In the sacred Scriptures are two notices of the Ethiopian armies. Zerah, king of the Ethiopians, went against Asa, King of Judah, with a million warriors. How vast an army! Again, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, in great haughtiness was about to attack Israel, but on obtaining information of the approach of Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, he disgracefully fled.

We should be guilty of overlooking one of the chief features of their greatness did we not refer to their moral character. They are, in the Greek mythology and poets, represented as the most noble, religious and the most blameless of men. In the immortal epic poem written by the eminent Homer, Achilles is depicted as beseeching his goddess mother, Thetis, to intercede with Jupiter in his behalf. She states to her beloved son that Jupiter, in company with the other gods, had departed to feast with the blameless Ethiopians. Others have glowingly described them as men characterized by equity, sagacity and truth.

We cannot close this discourse in a better manner than by transcribing here the testimony of Heeren, taken from his *Historical Researches*: “Except the Egyptians, there is no aboriginal people of Africa with so many claims upon our attention as the Ethiopians—from the remotest times to the present one of the most celebrated and yet the most mysterious of people. In the earliest traditions of nearly all the most civilized nations of antiquity the name of this distinct people is found. The annals of the Egyptian priests were full of them. The nations of inner Asia, on the Euphrates and Tigris, have interwoven the fictions of Ethiopia with their own traditions of the conquest and wars of their heroes, and at a period equally remote they glimmer in Greek mythology. When the Ethiopians scarcely knew Italy and Sicily by name, they were themselves celebrated as the re-

motest nation, the most just of men, the favorites of the gods. The lofty inhabitants of Olympus journey to them and take part in their feasts; their sacrifices are the most agreeable of all that mortals can offer. And when the faint gleam of tradition and fable give way to the clear light of history, the lustre of the Ethiopians is not diminished. They still continue the object of curiosity and admiration, and the pen of the cautious, clear-sighted historian often places them in the highest rank of knowledge and civilization."



